

In re: Bares et al.
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REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Action of January 19, 2007 (hereinafter "Office Action"). In response, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references do not disclose or suggest, at least, a knowledge base that includes information generated from one or more conversations and the use of the knowledge base to generate a response to a customer communication. Accordingly, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of all pending claims is respectfully requested for at least the reasons discussed hereafter.

Claims 1, 17, 23, 39, 45, and 61 are Patentable

Independent Claims 1, 17, 23, 39, 45, and 61 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,138,139 to Beck et al. (hereinafter "Beck"). (Office Action, page 2). Independent Claim 1 is directed to a method of responding to a customer communication that recites, in part:

...
generating a response to the utterance received from the customer at the agent based on a knowledge base that comprises information extracted from at least one exemplary conversation, wherein the at least one exemplary conversation comprises an exchange of utterances; and
... (emphasis added).

Independent Claim 17 is directed to a method of training an agent to respond to a customer communication that recites:

compiling at least one exemplary conversation, wherein the at least one exemplary conversation comprises an exchange of utterances;
annotating the compiled at least one conversation to categorize information contained therein;
processing the annotated at least one conversation using a machine learning engine to populate a knowledge base for use by the agent in generating a response to the customer communication. (Emphasis added).

Independent Claims 23, 39, 45, and 61 include similar recitations. Thus, according to independent Claim 1 a response is generated at the agent based on a knowledge base that includes information generated from one or more conversations. According to independent

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Claim 17, an agent is trained by compiling one or more exemplary conversations, annotating the compiled conversation(s), and processing the annotated conversation(s) to populate a knowledge base for use by the agent in generating a response to the customer communication.

As shown in FIG. 1, Beck discloses a multimedia communications center 17 that includes multiple agents 31, 33, 35, and 37 that respond to customer communications. Beck explains that "[i]n the exemplary system and communication center shown, the equipment and applications are adapted to provide for multimedia operation at each of the agent stations, so the agents can interact with clients in many different ways, as are known in the multimedia arts." (Beck, col. 6, lines 49 - 53). Beck also teaches that communications with customers or clients can be recorded. For example, Beck states "[a]ll interactions with live external media, including actual text-based events whether live or not, are recorded and stored in MIS 79 with an associated text version of the media stored as well, and becoming part of an overall threaded contact history." (Beck, col. 8, lines 45 - 49).

In sharp contrast with the recitations of the pending independent claims, the interactions stored in Beck's system are not used by an agent to generate a response to a customer communication or utterance. Instead, Beck teaches that the interactions stored in the MIS 79 are used to determine how to route a particular customer communication. For example, as shown in FIG. 3, at blocks 103 and 115, a call is routed to a particular agent based on the information stored in the knowledge base, i.e., MIS 79. (Beck, col. 12, lines 47 - 50 and FIG. 3). Moreover, the agents in Beck that generate a response to a customer communication are humans. Independent Claim 1, however, describes the agent as "executing on a data processing system" and independent Claim 17 is directed to a method of "training an agent." Thus, the "agent" referred to in the pending claims is clearly not a human being.

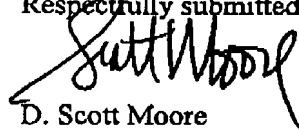
For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 17, 23, 39, 45, and 61 are patentable over Beck and that dependent Claims 2 - 16, 18 - 22, 24 - 38, 40 - 44, 46 - 60, and 62 - 66 are patentable at least by virtue of their depending from an allowable claim.

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CONCLUSION

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

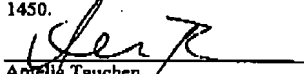
Respectfully submitted,


D. Scott Moore
Registration No. 42,011

USPTO Customer No. 20792
Myers Bigel Sibley & Sajovec
Post Office Box 37428
Raleigh, North Carolina 27627
Telephone: 919/854-1400
Facsimile: 919/854-1401

CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION UNDER 37 CFR § 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office via facsimile number 571-273-8300 on April 19, 2007 and is addressed to Mail Stop Amendment. Commissioner for Patents, P.O., Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.


Antella Tauchen